

elections until December. Two months were added to the interregnum. The Cadets considered this delay a major victory. Actually, it gave the Communists time to recover from the July defeat, regroup their forces, and prepare a new coup.

FAREWELL TO THE TAURIDE PALACE

In the Tauride Palace a persistent feeling of approaching catastrophe was mixed with apathy. The Executive Committee met every day. Heroic resolutions were passed. I was busy writing passionate appeals to workers, soldiers, peasants, citizens, anyone. I wrote with an increasing feeling of frustration, hating the clichés I had to use. "The nation is going down!" "The revolution is in peril!" "Let the new government be a government of salvation!" Once I facetiously suggested that the Executive Committee use a telegraphic code in its resolutions and appeals: "Nagodown" for "Nation goes down," "Repril" for "Revolution is in Peril," and so on. The formation of the Government of National Salvation (Gonsal, in my code) had degenerated into mysterious behind-the-scene deals and resulted in transferring power to a group of persons whose names and words meant nothing to the nation.

I did not witness the final stage of the formation of the new government. I was so disgusted with the new course of affairs in Petrograd that I began to think of quitting the Tauride Palace. Five months of work as trouble-shooter and pen-pusher for the Executive Committee had been perhaps the most frustrating phase of my political life. Even now I remember this time as a long nightmare, full of unbearable tension, helplessness, and boredom. Sleepless nights, endless speeches, an ocean of strange faces, suspicious eyes, unanswered questions, decisions that decided nothing, resolutions that left all problems unsolved. My rare moments of light, satisfaction, and enthusiasm were like sparks of a bonfire in a pitch-dark night: they did not disperse the darkness but made it thicker.

My deep depression was due partly to overwork and nervous exhaustion. We had no organized timetable of work—no office hours, no Sundays, no holidays, no regular hours for meals, no time for reading the newspapers or talking with one another. In those five months I hardly had five meals at home or in a restaurant with Emma. There were nights when the telephone would awaken me for some meeting that seemed very important at the moment but actually was as irrelevant as most of the things we were doing. In all that time I had not a single evening when I could go to a theater with Emma or spend a few hours with her or my mother and sister. Back in Petrograd after